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(71) Applicant: **HITACHI, LTD.**
6, Kanda Surugadal 4-chome Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100(JP)

(72) Inventor: **Shimizu, Norio**
6-2, Honcho-4-chome
Kokubunji-shi(JP)
Inventor: **Fukuzono, Shinichi**
32-C-303, Koyasumachi-2-chome
Hachioji-shi(JP)
Inventor: **Fujimori, Kiyoshi**
Nerimayo, 16-10, Tatenochi Nerima-ku
Tokyo(JP)
Inventor: **Nishimura, Nobuko**
6-9-205, Nagahoricho-1-chome
Katsuta-shi(JP)
Inventor: **Odawara, Yoji**
Hitachi Daiyon Kyoshinryo B207, 14-6
Nishikolgakubo-4-chome Kokubunji-shi(JP)

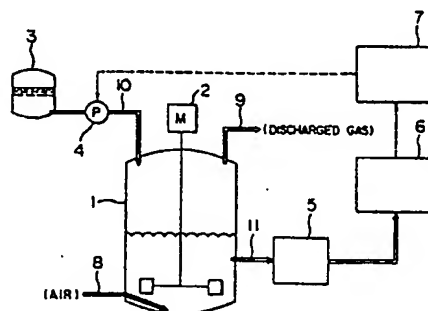
(74) Representative: **von Fünér, Alexander, Dr. et al**
Patentanwälte v. Fünér, Ebbinghaus, Finck
Mariahilfplatz 2 & 3
D-8000 München 90(DE)

(34) Method for cultivation with acetate concentration monitoring and apparatus for the same.

(37) In a method for cultivation of microorganisms or animal cell or plant cells to produce metabolites, high density cultivation, high cell yield and high production of desired products can be achieved by performing cultivation through monitoring acetate concentration in culture broth and regulating assimilation of acetate in the culture broth by the microorganisms or animal cell or plant cells to control the acetate concentration to a set value or less, and as an apparatus for such cultivation, preferred is an apparatus comprising a culture tank for performing cultivation, an acetate concentration analyzer in culture broth, a substrate tank for storing substrate, a substrate feeding device of variable flow type for feeding substrate and a control device for outputting

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FIG. 1



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Tokyo(JP)
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Katsuta-shi(JP)
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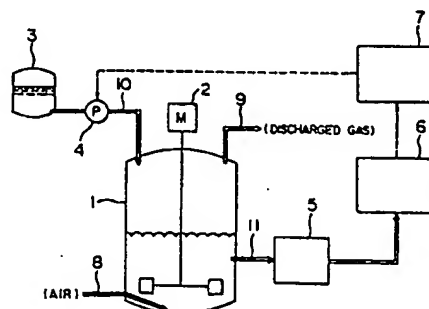
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Marlahilfplatz 2 & 3
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FIG. 1



METHOD FOR CULTIVATION WITH ACETATE CONCENTRATION MONITORING AND APPARATUS FOR THE SAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method for cultivation of microorganisms or animal cells or plant cells, in particular, recombinant microorganisms with acetate concentration monitoring to efficiently produce desired useful substances such as enzymes or biologically active substances. The present invention also relates to an apparatus for the method.

PRIOR ART STATEMENT

By cultivation of microorganisms or animal cells or plant cells, especially recombinant microorganisms, there has been hitherto produced enzymes, antibiotics, amino acids, or biologically active substances such as hormones or the like which are metabolites. This method for cultivation is mostly batch culture which comprises simply charging medium and seed cells in a culture tank. As a matter of course, the productivity is low.

In order to enhance the productivity, there is performed a culture method in which a substrate or inducer is added during the course of cultivation. However, it is a problem that at which point of the cultivation the substrate or inducer should be added and its clear indicator is unknown. On the other hand, in cultivation using baker's yeast, there is known a method which comprises detecting the production of ethanol with respiratory quotient and feeding substrate [Japanese Patent KOKAI (Laid-Open) Nos. 36983/1982 and 78584/1983]. However, this is cultivation for producing cell mass per se which are quite dissimilar to producing the metabolites.

Further in spite of adding substrate, there is a phenomenon that the growth rate of cells decreases during cultivation. This is said to be due to proliferation-inhibitory substances accumulated in culture broth. However, there is little finding on the proliferation-inhibitory substances. Also from this aspect, efficient cultivation can be achieved only with difficulty. In order to remove the proliferation-inhibitory substances without specifying them, there is known a method which comprises withdrawing culture broth intermittently or continuously, recovering the cells by centrifugation and charging the cells again in a culture tank [Japanese Patent KOKAI (Laid-Open) No. 29985/1978]. However, this

method is directed to baker's yeast and mass production of cells per se not a process for allowing the cells to produce the desired substances.

The prior art described above was developed without consideration of adding substrate or the like or monitoring proliferation-inhibitory substances and involved problems of difficulty in cell growth and production of metabolites.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide a method for cultivation of microorganisms or animal cells or plant cells, especially recombinant microorganisms with acetate concentration monitoring to produce the metabolites as well as an apparatus for the method.

A first invention of the present invention relates to a method for cultivation of microorganisms or animal cells or plant cells to produce the metabolites which comprises a step of monitoring acetate concentration in culture broth and controlling the acetate concentration to a set value or less through regulating assimilation of the acetate in culture broth by the microorganisms or animal cells or plant cells.

Further a second invention of the present invention relates to a cultivation apparatus comprising a culture tank for performing cultivation, an acetate concentration analyzer in culture broth, a substrate tank for storing substrate, a substrate feeding device of variable flow type for feeding substrate and a control device for outputting a signal for controlling a substrate flow from the substrate feeding device based on a signal from the analyzer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a schematic illustration of an example of cultivation apparatus of the present invention.

Figure 2 is graphs showing results of fed-batch culture using recombinant Escherichia coli.

Figure 3 is graphs showing an example of relationship between acetic acid concentration in culture broth and specific growth rate.

Figure 4 is a graph showing an example of relationship between acetic acid concentration and β -gal production.

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Figure 5 is graphs showing an example of acetate assimilation of recombinant Escherichia coli.

Figure 6 is graphs showing cell growth in relationship between culture time and cell concentration under the respective conditions of Figure 5.

Figures 7 through 9 each is graphs showing an example of results of fed-batch culture using recombinant Escherichia coli, with acetic acid concentration monitoring in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 10 is graphs showing results of cultivation in Comparative Example,

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Hereafter, the present invention is concretely described below with the method for cultivation of Escherichia coli strain HB 101 [pTREZ 1], which was deposited with FRI under the Budapest Treaty and given Accession No. FERM BP-815, bearing hybrid plasmid pTREZ 1 comprising trp (tryptophane)-promoter and β -gal (β -galactosidase) gene ligated therewith, and an apparatus for the method. However, the present invention is not deemed to be limited thereto.

The trp-promoter portion of hybrid plasmid pTREZ 1 is a DNA fragment of about 500 bp (base pairs) containing trp promoter-operator of Escherichia coli, trp-L (leader peptide gene) and a part of the tip of trp-E (anthranilate synthetase), which is inserted in EcoR I site of pBR 322 plasmid. On the other hand, β -gal gene has a size of 6.2 kb excised from pMC 1403 [J. Bacteriol., 143, 971 - 980 (1980)] and is inserted between EcoR I site of trp-promoter and Sal I site of pBR 322. As such, β -gal gene of hybrid plasmid pTREZ 1 is under control of trp-promoter.

It is known that by adding 3- β -indolylacrylic acid (hereafter simply referred to as IA) during cultivation, a hybrid plasmid containing trp-promoter causes expression of gene [(Nature, 291, 503 - 506 (1981)]. This is due to inactivation of repressor for controlling transcription of gene with IA.

As a result of various investigations on a method of cultivation for efficiently producing β -gal using recombinant Escherichia coli capable of producing β -gal as a model, the present inventors have succeeded in efficient proliferation of cells and efficiently production of desired substances and, have come to accomplish the present invention.

figure 2 shows the results of fed-batch culture using recombinant Escherichia coli. Namely, Figure 2 is graphs showing an example of results of fed-

batch culture in relationship between culture time (h, abscissa) and cell concentration (g/l), amount of β -gal (U/ml) and glucose concentration (g/l) [ordinate].

Cultivation was performed by feeding glucose and casamino acid medium with monitoring a rise in dissolved oxygen concentration. The cell concentration reached 13 g/l at 18 hours of cultivation but at this time, the cell growth stopped. For induction of β -gal production, IA as an inducer and casamino acids as nutrients, i.e., substrate were added at 32 hours of cultivation but β -gal production was not induced. The reason why the cell growth stopped and no β -gal production was induced as such seemed to be due to the presence, in culture supernatant, of substances which inhibit cell growth or β -gal production.

Thus, the supernatant of culture broth at 19 hours when cell growth stopped was collected and cell growth-inhibitory substances were separated from the supernatant using ultrafiltration membrane and ion-exchange resin. The thus separated liquid was analyzed for organic acids using an isotachophoretic analyzer. The results reveal that acetic acid was accumulated in a high concentration of 33 g/l. In culture broth, acetic acid is generally present in the form of acetate owing to pH-adjustment. Therefore, the corresponding amount of acetate was added to fresh medium followed by cultivation, whereby the cell growth was inhibited (cf. Figure 3). From this fact, it was found that a substance participating in the cell growth inhibition was acetate. With regard to expression of gene (β -gal production), almost the same results as in the cell growth inhibition were obtained (cf. Figure 4). That is, Figure 3 is a graph showing an example of the relationship between an acetic acid concentration (g/l, abscissa) in culture broth of recombinant Escherichia coli and its specific growth rate (1/h, ordinate) and Figure 4 is a graph showing an example of the relationship between an acetic acid concentration (g/l, abscissa) in culture broth and β -gal production (U/ml, ordinate).

It was also confirmed by analysis of the supernatant of culture broth using gas chromatography that the inhibitory substance was acetate.

As described above, the acetate accumulated in culture broth inhibits the cell growth and based on this finding, the present inventors have come to conceive that by feeding a substrate with acetate concentration monitoring, the cells could be efficiently proliferated. For such a purpose, it is necessary to remove the acetate accumulated in culture broth. In order to remove the acetate, the present inventors performed removal of acetate by allowing the cells to assimilate the acetate. Thus, acetate was added to culture broth in 0 to 10 g/l calculated as an acetic acid concentration and investigations

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were made on a possibility of acetate assimilation of recombinant bacteria. As shown in Figure 5, an acetic acid concentration in culture broth increased at the initial stage of cultivation because 1 g/l of glucose was added to culture broth but the acetic acid concentration gradually decreased thereafter. This reveals that the acetate in culture broth was assimilated by the cells. Changes dependent on time of cell concentration are shown in Figure 6. Namely, Figure 5 is graphs showing an example of acetate assimilation of recombinant *Escherichia coli* in relationship between incubation time (h, abscissa) and acetic acid concentration (g/l, ordinate). In Figure, initial acetic acid concentrations of 0, 1, 5 and 10 g/l are shown by "○", "●", "△" and "▲", respectively. Figure 6 is graphs showing cell growth in relationship between incubation time (h, abscissa) and cell concentration (QD. 550 nm, ordinate) under each condition of Figure 5. As is clearly seen from Figure 6, the cell concentration increased by acetate assimilation of the cells, as compared to the case that no acetate was added.

These results indicate that it is convenient, effective and advantageous to control the assimilation of acetate, i.e., acetate concentration, by controlling an amount of substrate fed.

Based on the foregoing results, it has been found that advantageous is a method for cultivation in which, by monitoring acetate concentration in culture broth and when the acetate concentration becomes higher than a set value, an amount of fed substrate is reduced or feeding of substrate is discontinued thereby allowing the cells to assimilate acetate to reduce the acetate concentration and at the point of time when the acetate concentration becomes lower than the set value, substrate is again fed.

From the results of Figure 3, it is noted that the acetate concentration in culture broth in the present invention be suppressed to 15 g/l or less, preferably 5 g/l or less. For the set value to control the feeding of substrate, not only the acetate concentration is set at 5 g/l but also it is possible to set ranges, for example, from 1 to 3 g/l.

In addition, acetate concentration in culture broth exhibited inhibition on expression of gene, also upon the addition of an inducer thereby to cause expression of gene (Figure 4), likewise the case of cell growth. From these results, it is desired that also in the case of gene expression, the acetate concentration be 15 g/l or less, particularly 5 g/l.

In the present invention, the acetate can be detected rapidly and accurately by introducing the supernatant of culture broth into an isotachophoretic analyzer, a gas chromatograph, a liquid chromatograph, a mass spectrometer, etc.

As the cells usable in the present invention,

there are, for example, microorganisms such as yeast, *Bacillus subtilis* and *Actinomyces*; animal cells; plant cells; or recombinant cells of these microorganisms and animal cells or plant cells, etc., growth of which is inhibited by acetic acid, in addition to recombinant *Escherichia coli* described above. The present invention is applicable to these cells as far as the cells have an ability of assimilating the acetate.

Substrate which is fed to control the assimilation of acetate with microorganisms or animal cells or plant cells is generally nutrients and include casamino acid which is a mixture of amino acids, amino acids, glucose, yeast extract, etc.

Further for inducing the production of desired products such as enzymes, biologically active substances and so on, when the cells are recombinant *Escherichia coli*, cultivation in medium containing no tryptophan that suppresses expression of gene or having a low tryptophan concentration is effective in the case of trp promoter; in the case of lac-promoter and tac-promoter, addition of IPTG (isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactoside) or the like is effective; and, in the case of P_L -promoter, elevation of the temperature of cultivation is effective. These inducers or induction conditions are also applicable to recombinant microorganisms other than *Escherichia coli*. As the nutrients added for induction of the production of desired products, casamino acid which is a mixture of amino acids, amino acids, glucose, yeast extract, etc. are effective.

In the cultivation apparatus of the present invention, as has already been described briefly, a sample preparation device may be provided before the acetate concentration analyzer to prepare the collected culture broth sample in a form suited for the analyzer, but this is not necessarily required.

A preferred example of a device for feeding substrate is a pump.

As a matter of course, conduits for connecting each of these devices, facilitates for supplying raw materials and the like may additionally be attached to the apparatus.

The present invention will be described in more detail with reference to the examples below but is not deemed to be limited thereto.

Example 1

An example of the cultivation apparatus of the present invention is schematically illustrated in Figure 1. In Figure 1, numeral 1 denotes a culture tank, 2 denotes a stirrer, 3 denotes a substrate tank, 4 denotes a pump for feeding substrate, 5 denotes a sample preparation device, 6 denotes an acetate concentration analyzer, 7 denotes a computer for control and, 8 to 11 denote conduits.

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In the culture tank 1 charged with culture broth containing medium and microorganisms, a stirring part of the stirrer 2 equipped with motor M is encased. The air-introducing conduit 8 is connected with the culture tank 1 at the bottom thereof. Exit gas discharging conduit 9 is connected with the culture tank 1 at the upper part thereof. Culture broth withdrawing conduit 11 is connected with the culture tank 1 at the side thereof so as to contact with the culture broth. The sample preparation device 5 is connected with the acetate concentration analyzer 6 via the conduit 11. Substrate feeding pump 4 of variable flow type is connected with the substrate tank 3 via substrate feeding conduit 10 at the upper part of the culture tank 1. The control computer 7 is connected with the acetate concentration analyzer 6 and the substrate feeding pump 4.

In the sample preparation device 5, a cell separator and a device for acidifying the sample solution are encased. In the acetate concentration analyzer 6, a mass spectrometer or a gas chromatography and so on are encased.

Hereafter the operation of the present invention is in the culture tank 1, microorganism and substrate supplied from the substrate tank 3 as well as air from the conduit 8 are agitated by the stirrer 2, whereby microorganisms grow. The culture broth is withdrawn through the conduit 11 and sent to the sample preparation device 5, where cells are removed and at the same time the sample is acidified with an acid so that the acetate in the sample is converted into acetic acid. Then the sample is introduced into the acetate concentration analyzer 6. In case that a gas chromatograph is encased in the acetate concentration analyzer 6, the sample is used as it is in an acidic solution state and however, in case that a mass spectrometer is encased, acetic acid vaporized by bubbling with air is provided for analysis. A value of acetate concentration in culture broth analyzed with the acetate concentration analyzer 6 is transferred to the control computer and compared with the set value. In case that the determined acetate concentration is higher than the set value, a signal is sent to the substrate feeding pump 4 so as to stop the feeding of substrate or retard a substrate feeding rate, whereby an amount of feeding substrate is controlled. On the other hand, when the acetate concentration is lower than the set value, a signal is sent to the substrate feeding pump 4 so as to initiate the feeding of substrate or increase the substrate feeding rate, whereby an amount of feeding substrate is controlled. Thus, the acetate concentration in culture broth can be controlled to the set value or lower and the growth rate of cells can be maintained on a high level.

Example 2

Acetate in the cell culture broth was monitored with a gas chromatograph and a substrate-feeding amount was controlled so that acetate concentration in culture broth became 2 g/l or less. In order to suppress the action of trp-promoter upon cell growth, tryptophan was added to medium.

Cells:

E. coli strain HB 101 [pTREZ 1] having hybrid plasmid pTREZ 1.

Initial medium:

M9-casamino acid medium; which was composed of 1 g of NH_4Cl , 6 g of Na_2HPO_4 , 3 g of KH_2PO_4 , 0.5 g of NaCl , 0.1 g of $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 15 mg of $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.1 g of thiamine hydrochloride, 0.1 g of proline, 0.01 g of tryptophan, 5 g of glucose, 2.5 g of casamino acid, 1.5 g of yeast extract and 1 liter of distilled water, and had a pH of 7.0. To the medium was added 50 mg/liter of ampicillin (Ap) in order to grow only E. coli having hybrid plasmid.

Medium for substrate feeding:

This medium was composed of 200 g of glucose, 4 g of proline, 100 g of casamino acid, 60 g of yeast extract, 0.4 g of tryptophan and 1 liter of distilled water, and had a pH of 7.0.

Culture conditions:

E. coli having hybrid plasmid was inoculated into four 500 ml shaker flasks each containing 50 ml of M9-casamino acid medium and followed by cultivation overnight by means of a shaker under the conditions of a stroke of 7 cm, an oscillation of 115 times/min. at 37°C. Into a 5 liter jar fermenter containing M9-casamino acid medium was inoculated 200 ml of the seed culture thus obtained. Culture was initiated at an initial liquid volume of culture broth of 2 liters, at 37°C and pH 7.0 at gas flow rate of 2 liters/min. Acetate concentration in culture broth was measured by introducing the supernatant into a gas chromatograph packed with PEG 600 + Fulsin P (manufactured by Gasukuro kogyo). At the point when acetate concentration reached 2 g/l, feeding of substrate was discontinued.

In the culture tank 1 charged with culture broth containing medium and microorganisms, a stirring part of the stirrer 2 equipped with motor M is encased. The air-introducing conduit 8 is connected with the culture tank 1 at the bottom thereof. Exit gas discharging conduit 9 is connected with the culture tank 1 at the upper part thereof. Culture broth withdrawing conduit 11 is connected with the culture tank 1 at the side thereof so as to contact with the culture broth. The sample preparation device 5 is connected with the acetate concentration analyzer 6 via the conduit 11. Substrate feeding pump 4 of variable flow type is connected with the substrate tank 3 via substrate feeding conduit 10 at the upper part of the culture tank 1. The control computer 7 is connected with the acetate concentration analyzer 6 and the substrate feeding pump 4.

In the sample preparation device 5, a cell separator and a device for acidifying the sample solution are encased. In the acetate concentration analyzer 6, a mass spectrometer or a gas chromatography and so on are encased.

Hereafter the operation of the present invention is in the culture tank 1, microorganism and substrate supplied from the substrate tank 3 as well as air from the conduit 8 are agitated by the stirrer 2, whereby microorganisms grow. The culture broth is withdrawn through the conduit 11 and sent to the sample preparation device 5, where cells are removed and at the same time the sample is acidified with an acid so that the acetate in the sample is converted into acetic acid. Then the sample is introduced into the acetate concentration analyzer 6. In case that a gas chromatograph is encased in the acetate concentration analyzer 6, the sample is used as it is in an acidic solution state and however, in case that a mass spectrometer is encased, acetic acid vaporized by bubbling with air is provided for analysis. A value of acetate concentration in culture broth analyzed with the acetate concentration analyzer 6 is transferred to the control computer and compared with the set value. In case that the determined acetate concentration is higher than the set value, a signal is sent to the substrate feeding pump 4 so as to stop the feeding of substrate or retard a substrate feeding rate, whereby an amount of feeding substrate is controlled. On the other hand, when the acetate concentration is lower than the set value, a signal is sent to the substrate feeding pump 4 so as to initiate the feeding of substrate or increase the substrate feeding rate, whereby an amount of feeding substrate is controlled. Thus, the acetate concentration in culture broth can be controlled to the set value or lower and the growth rate of cells can be maintained on a high level.

Example 2

Acetate in the cell culture broth was monitored with a gas chromatograph and a substrate-feeding amount was controlled so that acetate concentration in culture broth became 2 g/l or less. In order to suppress the action of trp-promoter upon cell growth, tryptophan was added to medium.

Cells:

E. coli strain HB 101 [pTREZ 1] having hybrid plasmid pTREZ 1.

Initial medium:

M9-casamino acid medium; which was composed of 1 g of NH_4Cl , 6 g of Na_2HPO_4 , 3 g of KH_2PO_4 , 0.5 g of NaCl , 0.1 g of $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 15 mg of $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.1 g of thiamine hydrochloride, 0.1 g of proline, 0.01 g of tryptophan, 5 g of glucose, 2.5 g of casamino acid, 1.5 g of yeast extract and 1 liter of distilled water, and had a pH of 7.0. To the medium was added 50 mg/liter of ampicillin (Ap) in order to grow only E. coli having hybrid plasmid.

Medium for substrate feeding:

This medium was composed of 200 g of glucose, 4 g of proline, 100 g of casamino acid, 60 g of yeast extract, 0.4 g of tryptophan and 1 liter of distilled water, and had a pH of 7.0.

Culture conditions:

E. coli having hybrid plasmid was inoculated into four 500 ml shaker flasks each containing 50 ml of M9-casamino acid medium and followed by cultivation overnight by means of a shaker under the conditions of a stroke of 7 cm, an oscillation of 115 times/min. at 37°C. Into a 5 liter jar fermenter containing M9-casamino acid medium was inoculated 200 ml of the seed culture thus obtained. Culture was initiated at an initial liquid volume of culture broth of 2 liters, at 37°C and pH 7.0 at gas flow rate of 2 liters/min. Acetate concentration in culture broth was measured by introducing the supernatant into a gas chromatograph packed with PEG 600 + Fulsin P (manufactured by Gasukuro kogyo). At the point when acetate concentration reached 2 g/l, feeding of substrate was discontinued.

Results:

The results are shown in Figure 7. That is to say, Figure 7 is graphs showing an example of cultivation in accordance with the present invention in relationship between culture time (h, abscissa) and acetic acid concentration (g/l), cell concentration (g/l), amount of β -gal produced (U/ml) and feeding rate (ml/min) [ordinate].

As shown in Figure 7, acetate was produced by feeding substrate but when the feeding of substrate was discontinued, acetate is assimilated by the cells, whereby acetate concentration in the culture broth decreased. By conducting cultivation on a suppressed level of the acetate concentration in culture broth, the cell concentration reached a high value of 29 g/l at 30 hours of cultivation. In order to suppress the action of trp-promoter, tryptophan was added to the medium for feeding substrate so that β -gal production could be suppressed until 22 hours of cultivation. However, 22 hours after, the suppression was derepressed due to a reduced concentration of tryptophan so that β -gal production was initiated again and an amount of β -gal produced finally reached 104 U/ml. In this example, β -gal was produced because the suppression was released due to the reduced tryptophan concentration, though the β -gal production can be initiated also by the addition of IA as an inducer. As described above, the cell concentration reached a high level of 29 g/l by lowering the acetate concentration in culture broth and the cell yield could be maintained at a high level of 0.57 g cells/g glucose.

Example 3

Acetate in the cell culture broth was monitored with a gas chromatograph and a substrate-feeding amount was controlled so that acetate concentration in culture broth become 2 g/l or less. No tryptophan was added to medium and β -gal was produced in association with cell growth.

Fed-batch culture was performed using the same strain under the same culture conditions as in Example 2 except for using tryptophan-free medium.

Results:

An example of cultivation results is shown in Figure 8 with relationship similar to Figure 7.

As shown in Figure 8, β -gal was produced in association with the cell growth. The cell concentration reached a high level of 36 g/l at 30 hours of

cultivation and the cell yield was 0.54 g cells/g glucose. However, β -gal production in this case was 59 U/ml which was lower than the value in Example 1.

Example 4

Acetate in cell culture broth was monitored with a gas chromatograph and a substrate-feeding amount was controlled so that acetate concentration in culture broth became 2 g/l or less. At the early stage of cultivation, tryptophan was added to medium for feeding substrate thereby to suppress β -gal production. At the late stage of cultivation, β -gal production was performed using tryptophan-free medium for feeding substrate.

The initial medium and medium for feeding substrate used in the early stage of cultivation were those similar to Example 1. At the late stage of cultivation, however, there was used medium for feeding substrate obtained by omitting yeast extract and tryptophan from the medium for feeding substrate of Example 1. Fed-batch culture was performed using the same strain under the same culture conditions as in Example 2 except for the medium described above.

Results:

An example of cultivation results is shown in Figure 9 in the relationship similar to Figure 7.

As shown in Figure 9, feeding was initiated at 12 hours of cultivation using tryptophan-free medium for feeding substrate and β -gal production was suddenly initiated and the maximum 70 U/ml of β -gal was produced. The cell concentration was 18.6 g/l and the cell yield was 0.52 g cells/g glucose.

Comparative Example 1

Any means for suppressing the formation of acetate was not taken except that substrate was fed as in Examples 2 and 3 so that glucose concentration in culture broth was at a low concentration of 1 g/l or less.

Fed-batch culture was performed using the same strain under the same culture conditions as in Example 2.

Results:

The results are shown in Figure 7. That is to say, Figure 7 is graphs showing an example of cultivation in accordance with the present invention in relationship between culture time (h, abscissa) and acetic acid concentration (g/l), cell concentration (g/l), amount of β -gal produced (U/ml) and feeding rate (ml/min) [ordinate].

As shown in Figure 7, acetate was produced by feeding substrate but when the feeding of substrate was discontinued, acetate is assimilated by the cells, whereby acetate concentration in the culture broth decreased. By conducting cultivation on a suppressed level of the acetate concentration in culture broth, the cell concentration reached a high value of 29 g/l at 30 hours of cultivation. In order to suppress the action of trp-promoter, tryptophan was added to the medium for feeding substrate so that β -gal production could be suppressed until 22 hours of cultivation. However, 22 hours after, the suppression was derepressed due to a reduced concentration of tryptophan so that β -gal production was initiated again and an amount of β -gal produced finally reached 104 U/ml. In this example, β -gal was produced because the suppression was released due to the reduced tryptophan concentration, though the β -gal production can be initiated also by the addition of IA as an inducer. As described above, the cell concentration reached a high level of 29 g/l by lowering the acetate concentration in culture broth and the cell yield could be maintained at a high level of 0.57 g cells/g glucose.

Example 3

Acetate in the cell culture broth was monitored with a gas chromatograph and a substrate-feeding amount was controlled so that acetate concentration in culture broth become 2 g/l or less. No tryptophan was added to medium and β -gal was produced in association with cell growth.

Fed-batch culture was performed using the same strain under the same culture conditions as in Example 2 except for using tryptophan-free medium.

Results:

An example of cultivation results is shown in Figure 8 with relationship similar to Figure 7.

As shown in Figure 8, β -gal was produced in association with the cell growth. The cell concentration reached a high level of 36 g/l at 30 hours of

cultivation and the cell yield was 0.54 g cells/g glucose. However, β -gal production in this case was 59 U/ml which was lower than the value in Example 1.

Example 4

Acetate in cell culture broth was monitored with a gas chromatograph and a substrate-feeding amount was controlled so that acetate concentration in culture broth became 2 g/l or less. At the early stage of cultivation, tryptophan was added to medium for feeding substrate thereby to suppress β -gal production. At the late stage of cultivation, β -gal production was performed using tryptophan-free medium for feeding substrate.

The initial medium and medium for feeding substrate used in the early stage of cultivation were those similar to Example 1. At the late stage of cultivation, however, there was used medium for feeding substrate obtained by omitting yeast extract and tryptophan from the medium for feeding substrate of Example 1. Fed-batch culture was performed using the same strain under the same culture conditions as in Example 2 except for the medium described above.

Results:

An example of cultivation results is shown in Figure 9 in the relationship similar to Figure 7.

As shown in Figure 9, feeding was initiated at 12 hours of cultivation using tryptophan-free medium for feeding substrate and β -gal production was suddenly initiated and the maximum 70 U/ml of β -gal was produced. The cell concentration was 18.6 g/l and the cell yield was 0.52 g cells/g glucose.

Comparative Example 1

Any means for suppressing the formation of acetate was not taken except that substrate was fed as in Examples 2 and 3 so that glucose concentration in culture broth was at a low concentration of 1 g/l or less.

Fed-batch culture was performed using the same strain under the same culture conditions as in Example 2.

Results:

An example of cultivation results is shown in Figure 10 with relationship similar to Figure 7.

As shown in Figure 10, acetate was formed in association with cell growth. At 20 hours of cultivation when acetate concentration reached 21 g/l, the cell growth stopped. At this time, the cell concentration was 21 g/l but the cell yield was at a low level of 0.36 g cells/ g glucose, indicating a very poor productivity. Further β -gal production was as extremely low as 8 U/ml.

As described above, according to the present invention, the acetate concentration in culture broth can be reduced so that there can be exhibited remarkable effects of easily achieving high density cultivation, high cell yield and high production of desired products. For example, in the case of β -gal production, high density cultivation of more than 25 g/l, high cell yield of more than 0.5 g cells/g glucose and high production of β -gal of more than 50 U/ml can be achieved.

While the invention has been described in detail and with reference to specific embodiments thereof, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope thereof.

Claims

1. A method for cultivation of a microorganism or an animal cell or plant cell to produce a metabolite, characterized by comprising a step of monitoring acetate concentration in culture broth and regulating assimilation of acetate in the culture broth by the microorganism or animal cell or plant cell to control the acetate concentration to a set value or less.

2. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said acetate concentration is controlled by regulating assimilation of the acetate through control of feeding substrate.

3. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said set value of acetate concentration is not greater than 15 g/l.

4. A method for cultivation according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein when the acetate concentration becomes higher than the set value, a substrate feeding amount is reduced or feeding of substrate is discontinued to allow the microorganism or animal cell or plant cell to assimilate the acetate, thereby to decrease the acetate concentration.

5. A method for cultivation according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein when the acetate concentration becomes lower than the set value, a substrate-feeding amount is increased or substrate is again fed.

6. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said microorganism or animal cell or plant cell is a microorganism or animal cell or plant cell capable of assimilating the acetate.

7. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said microorganism or animal or plant cell is a recombinant microorganism or a recombinant animal cell or plant cell.

8. A method for cultivation according to claim 2 wherein said substrate is a nutrient.

9. A method for cultivation according to claim 8 wherein said nutrient is at least one selected from the group consisting of casamino acid, an amino acid, glucose and yeast extract.

10. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said metabolite is an enzyme or a biologically active substance.

11. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein an inducer is added to produce the metabolite.

12. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said inducer acts on a promoter in an expression vector which the recombinant microorganism or the recombinant animal cell or plant cell bears.

13. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said microorganism is recombinant *Escherichia coli*.

14. A method for cultivation according to claim 7 wherein the expression vector which the recombinant microorganism bears is trp-promoter, lac-promoter, tac-promoter or P_L -promoter.

15. A method for cultivation according to claim 13 or 14 wherein as said Inducer, 3- β -indolyacrylic acid is used in the case of trp-promoter and isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactoside in the case of lac-promoter or tac-promoter.

16. A method for cultivation according to claim 13 or 14 wherein said metabolite is induced by using tryptophan-free medium or medium having a low tryptophan concentration in the case of recombinant *Escherichia coli* bearing trp-promoter and by elevation of a temperature of the culture broth in the case of recombinant *Escherichia coli* bearing P_L -promoter.

17. An apparatus for cultivation of a microorganism or an animal cell or plant cell to produce a metabolite, characterized by comprising:

- a culture tank for performing cultivation;
- an acetate concentration analyzer in culture broth;
- a substrate tank for storing substrate;
- a substrate feeding device of variable flow

Results:

An example of cultivation results is shown in Figure 10 with relationship similar to Figure 7.

As shown in Figure 10, acetate was formed in association with cell growth. At 20 hours of cultivation when acetate concentration reached 21 g/l, the cell growth stopped. At this time, the cell concentration was 21 g/l but the cell yield was at a low level of 0.36 g cells/ g glucose, indicating a very poor productivity. Further β -gal production was as extremely low as 8 U/ml.

As described above, according to the present invention, the acetate concentration in culture broth can be reduced so that there can be exhibited remarkable effects of easily achieving high density cultivation, high cell yield and high production of desired products. For example, in the case of β -gal production, high density cultivation of more than 25 g/l, high cell yield of more than 0.5 g cells/g glucose and high production of β -gal of more than 50 U/ml can be achieved.

While the invention has been described in detail and with reference to specific embodiments thereof, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope thereof.

Claims

1. A method for cultivation of a microorganism or an animal cell or plant cell to produce a metabolite, characterized by comprising a step of monitoring acetate concentration in culture broth and regulating assimilation of acetate in the culture broth by the microorganism or animal cell or plant cell to control the acetate concentration to a set value or less.

2. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said acetate concentration is controlled by regulating assimilation of the acetate through control of feeding substrate.

3. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said set value of acetate concentration is not greater than 15 g/l.

4. A method for cultivation according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein when the acetate concentration becomes higher than the set value, a substrate feeding amount is reduced or feeding of substrate is discontinued to allow the microorganism or animal cell or plant cell to assimilate the acetate, thereby to decrease the acetate concentration.

5. A method for cultivation according to any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein when the acetate concentration becomes lower than the set value, a substrate-feeding amount is increased or substrate is again fed.

6. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said microorganism or animal cell or plant cell is a microorganism or animal cell or plant cell capable of assimilating the acetate.

7. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said microorganism or animal or plant cell is a recombinant microorganism or a recombinant animal cell or plant cell.

8. A method for cultivation according to claim 2 wherein said substrate is a nutrient.

9. A method for cultivation according to claim 8 wherein said nutrient is at least one selected from the group consisting of casamino acid, an amino acid, glucose and yeast extract.

10. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said metabolite is an enzyme or a biologically active substance.

11. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein an inducer is added to produce the metabolite.

12. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said inducer acts on a promoter in an expression vector which the recombinant microorganism or the recombinant animal cell or plant cell bears.

13. A method for cultivation according to claim 1 wherein said microorganism is recombinant Escherichia coli.

14. A method for cultivation according to claim 7 wherein the expression vector which the recombinant microorganism bears is trp-promoter, lac-promoter, tac-promoter or P_L-promoter.

15. A method for cultivation according to claim 13 or 14 wherein as said inducer, 3- β -indolylacrylic acid is used in the case of trp-promoter and isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactoside in the case of lac-promoter or tac-promoter.

16. A method for cultivation according to claim 13 or 14 wherein said metabolite is induced by using tryptophan-free medium or medium having a low tryptophan concentration in the case of recombinant Escherichia coli bearing trp-promoter and by elevation of a temperature of the culture broth in the case of recombinant Escherichia coli bearing P_L-promoter.

17. An apparatus for cultivation of a microorganism or an animal cell or plant cell to produce a metabolite, characterized by comprising:

- a culture tank for performing cultivation;
- an acetate concentration analyzer in culture broth;
- a substrate tank for storing substrate;
- a substrate feeding device of variable flow

type for feeding substrate; and

a control device for outputting a signal for controlling a substrate flow from the substrate feeding device based on a signal from the analyzer.

18. An apparatus for cultivation according to claim 17 wherein said acetate concentration analyzer is an isotachophoretic analyzer, a gas chromatograph, a liquid chromatograph or a mass spectrometer.

19. An apparatus for cultivation according to claim 17 wherein said substrate feeding device is a pump for feeding substrate.

20. An apparatus for cultivation according to claim 17 wherein said control device is a computer for control.

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type for feeding substrate; and

a control device for outputting a signal for controlling a substrate flow from the substrate feeding device based on a signal from the analyzer.

18. An apparatus for cultivation according to claim 17 wherein said acetate concentration analyzer is an isotachophoretic analyzer, a gas chromatograph, a liquid chromatograph or a mass spectrometer.

19. An apparatus for cultivation according to claim 17 wherein said substrate feeding device is a pump for feeding substrate.

20. An apparatus for cultivation according to claim 17 wherein said control device is a computer for control.

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FIG. 1

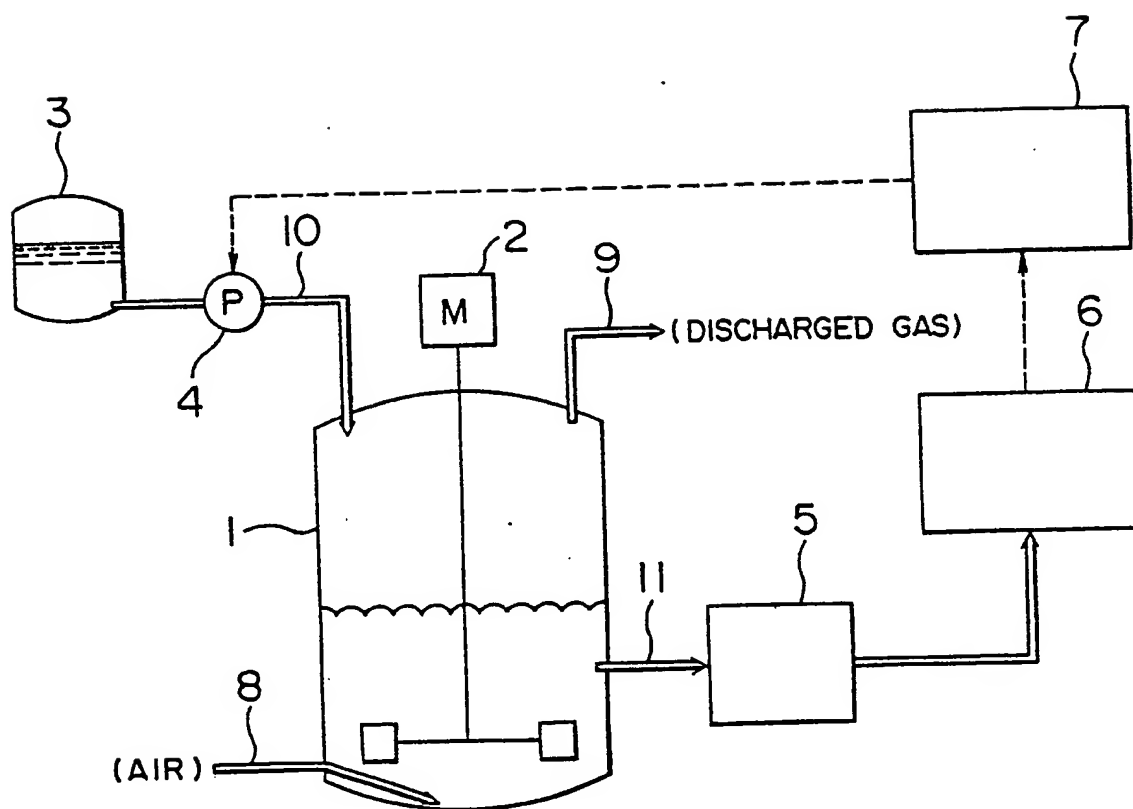


FIG. 1

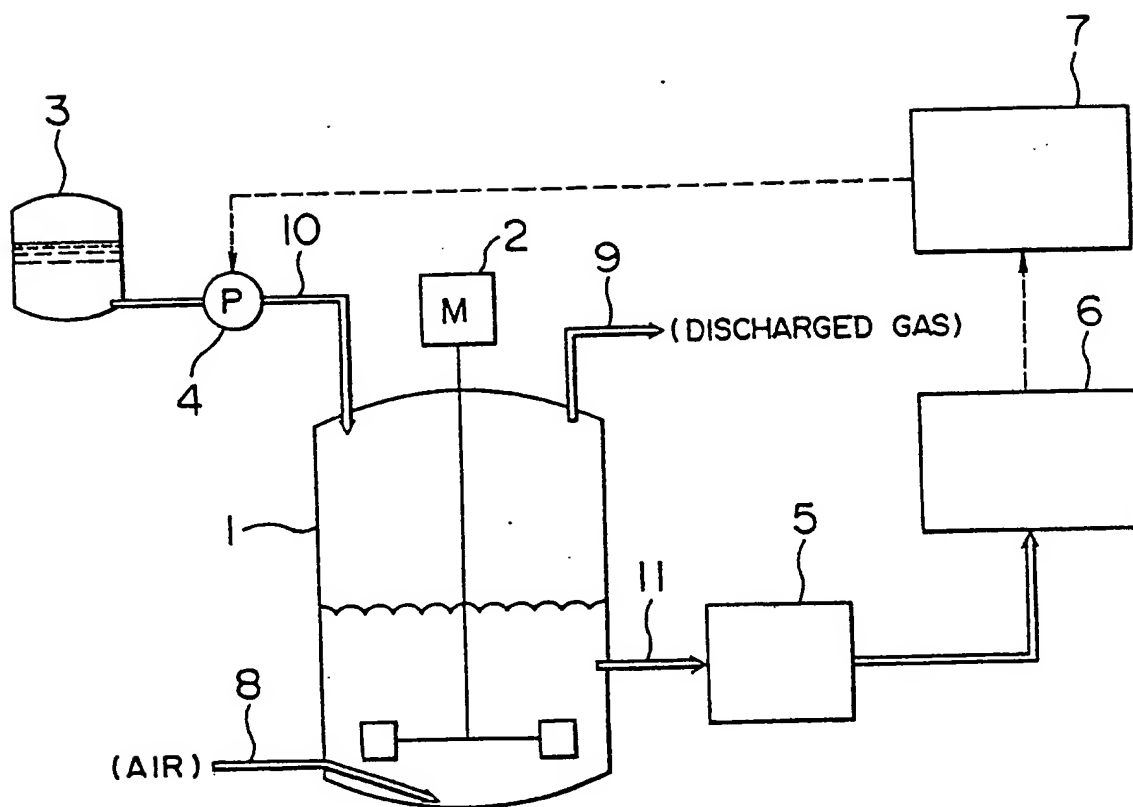


FIG. 2

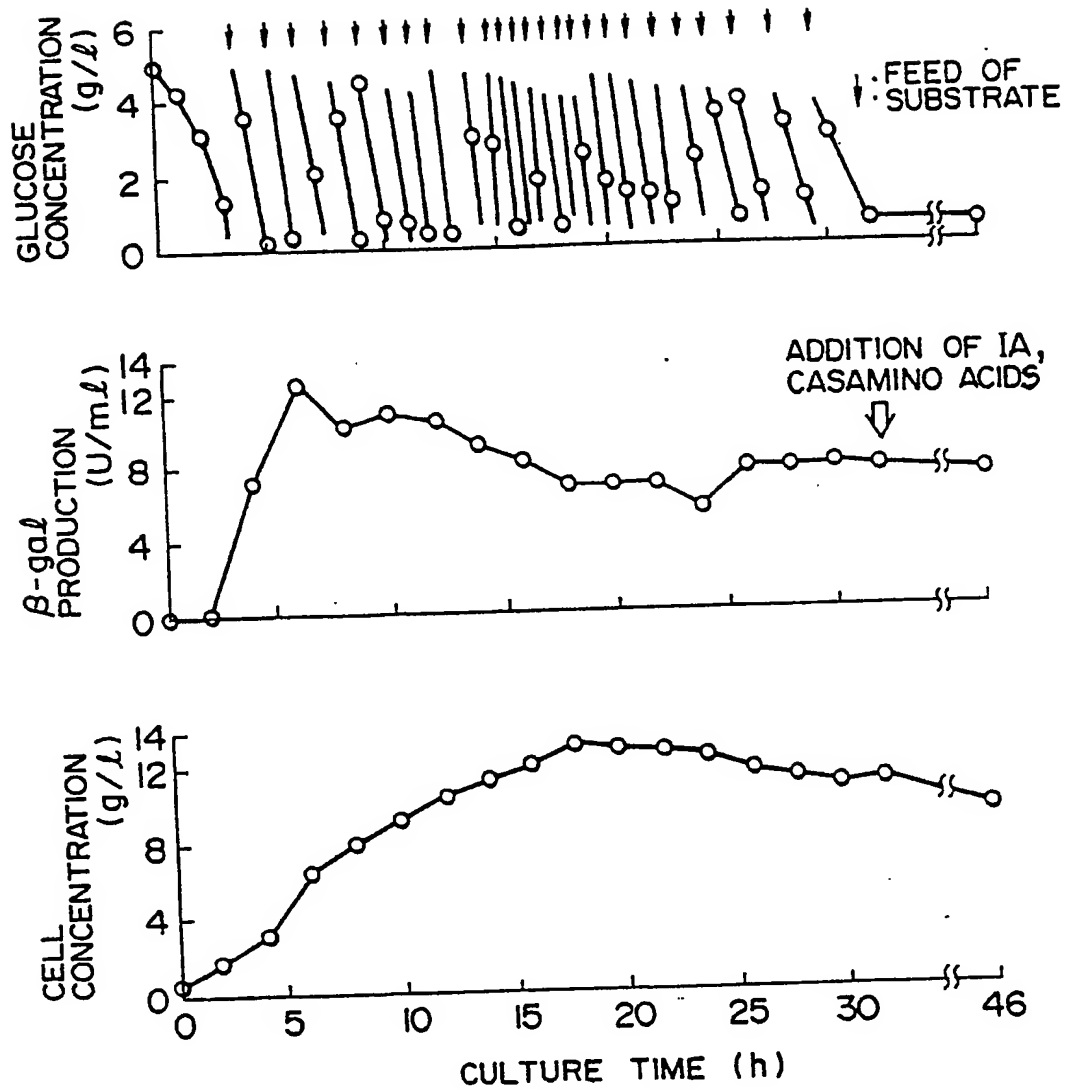


FIG. 2

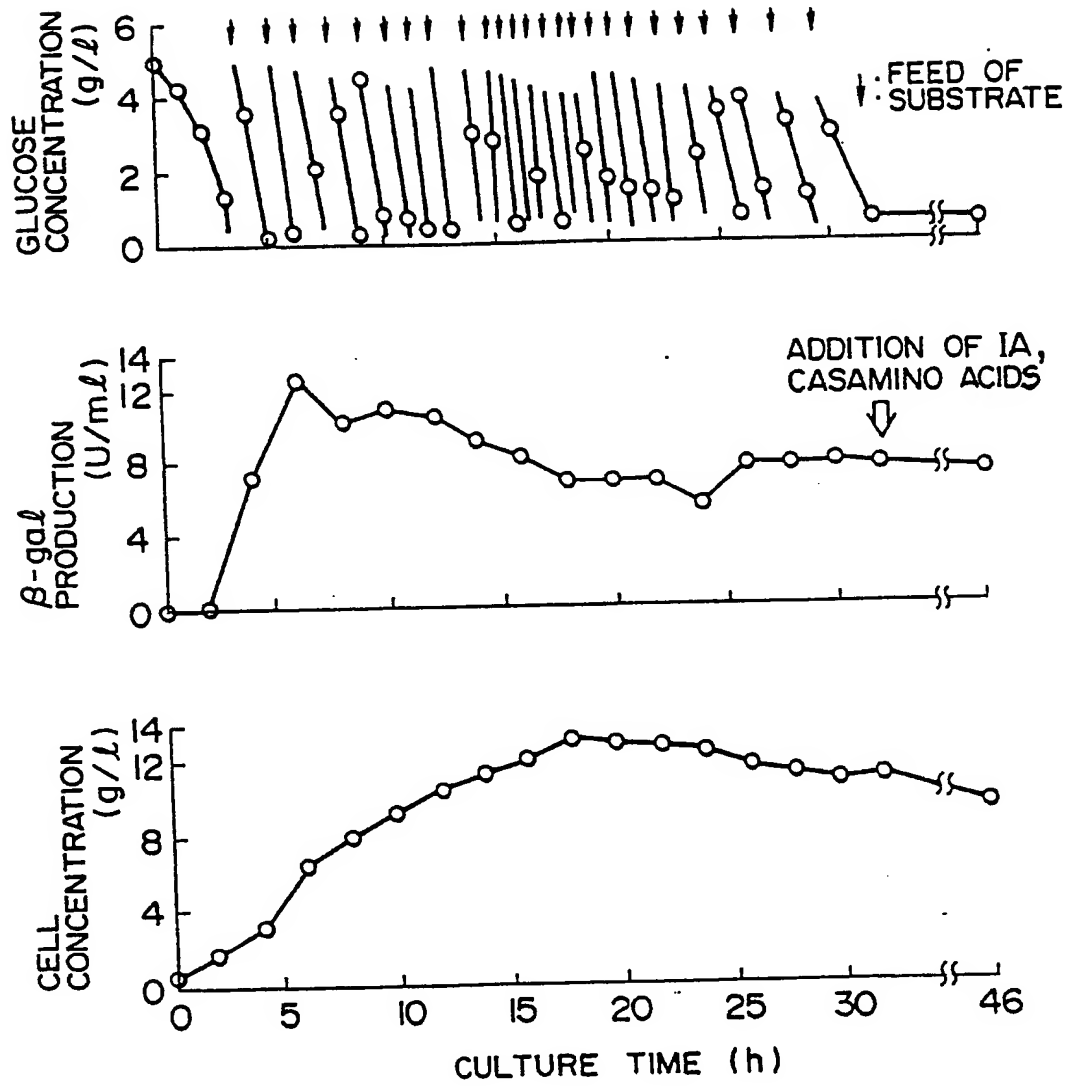


FIG. 3

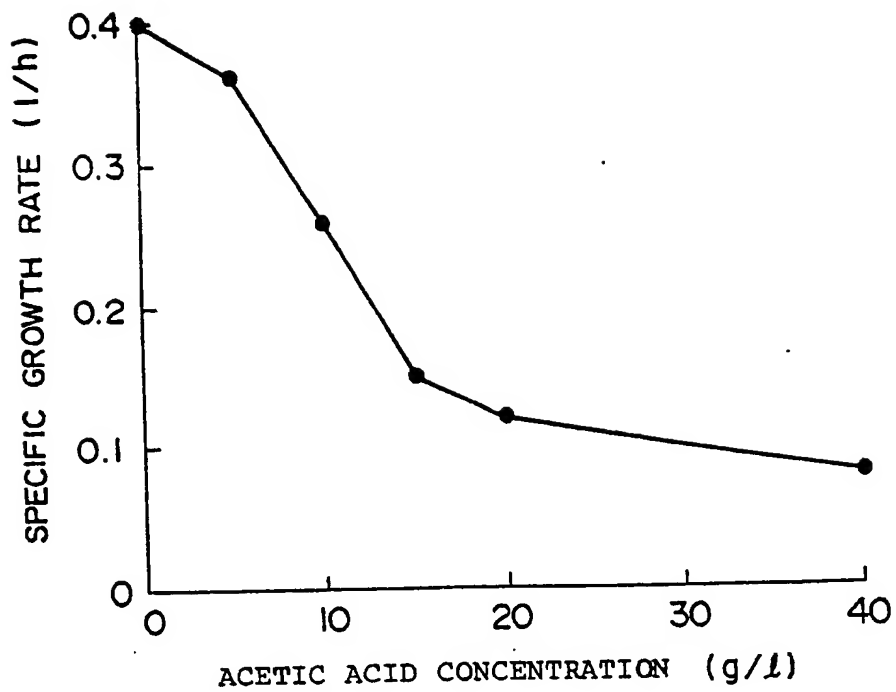


FIG. 4

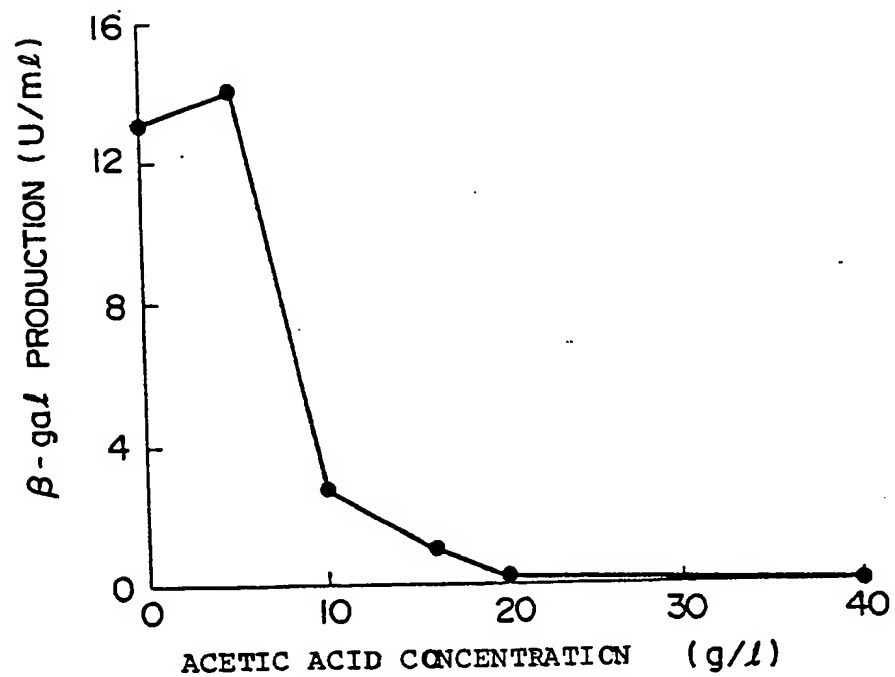


FIG. 3

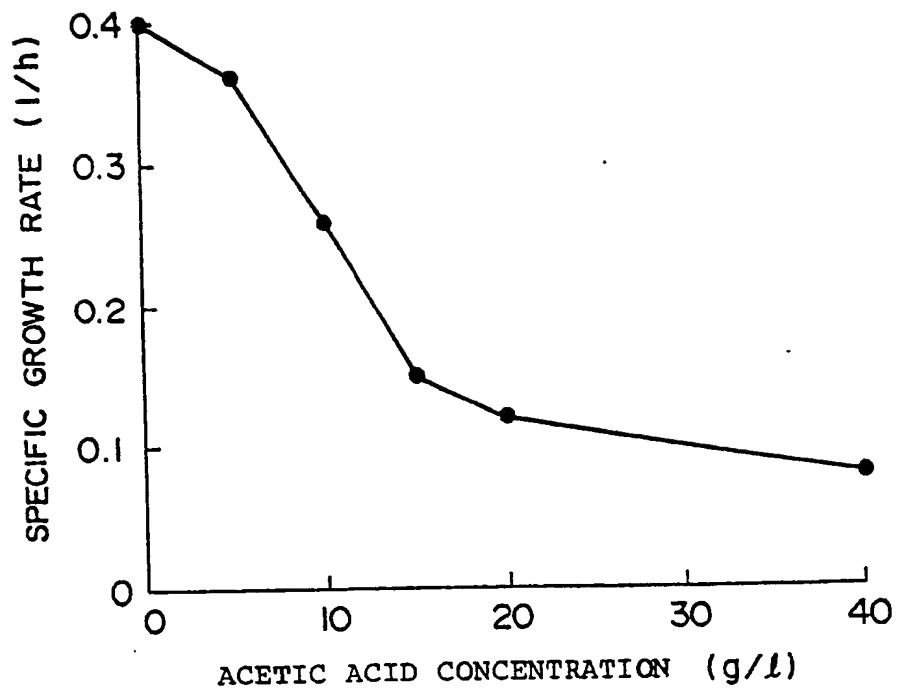


FIG. 4

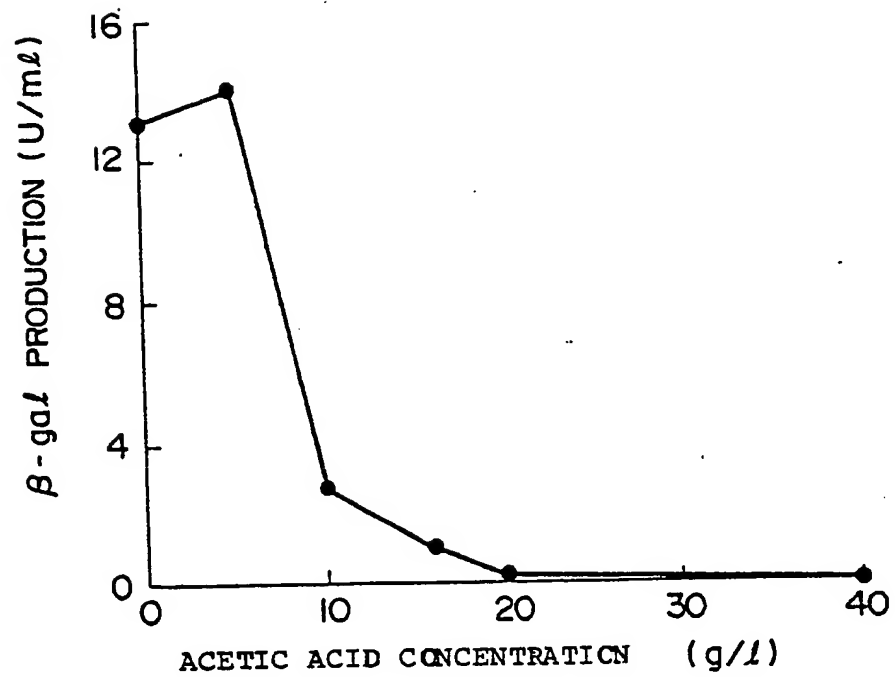


FIG. 5

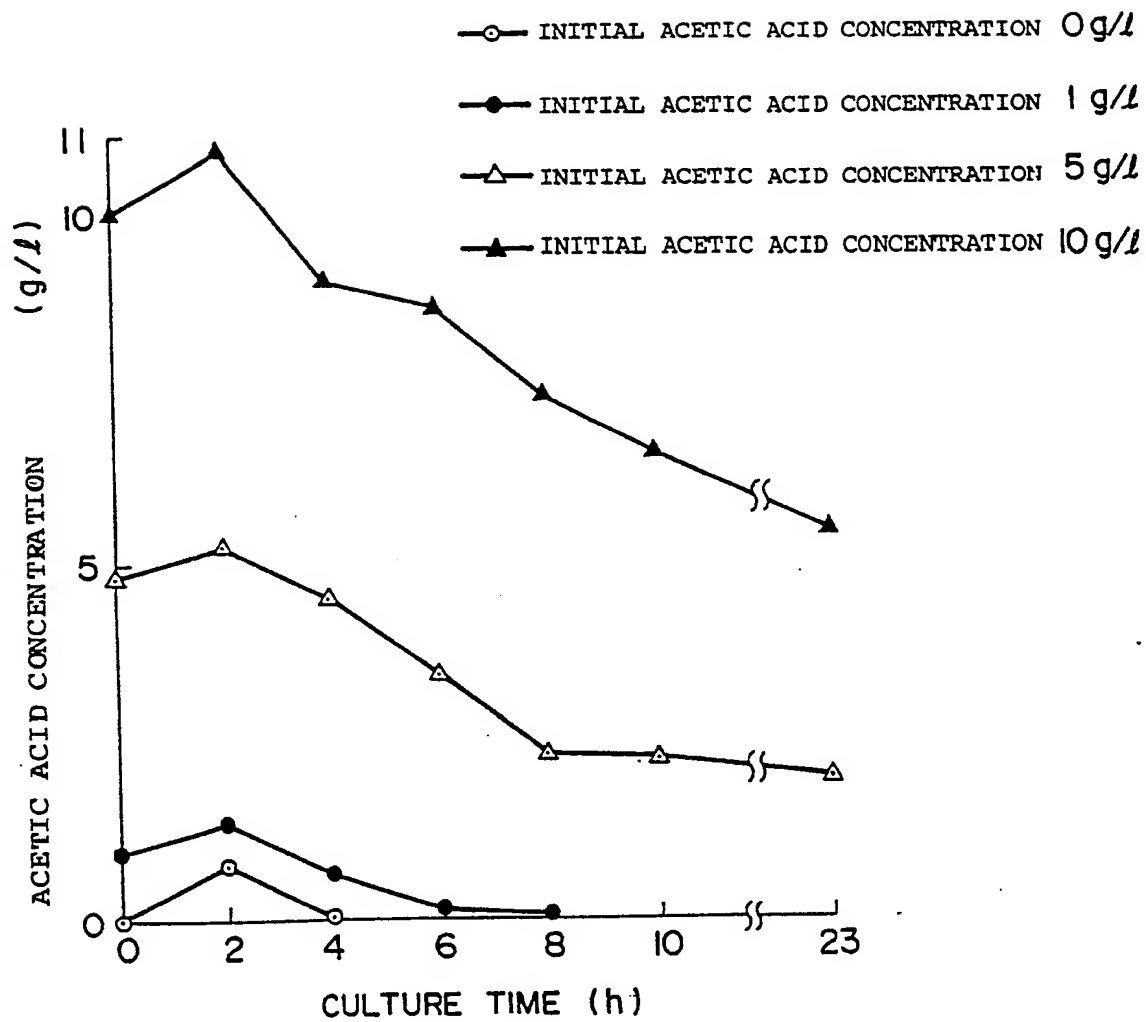


FIG. 5

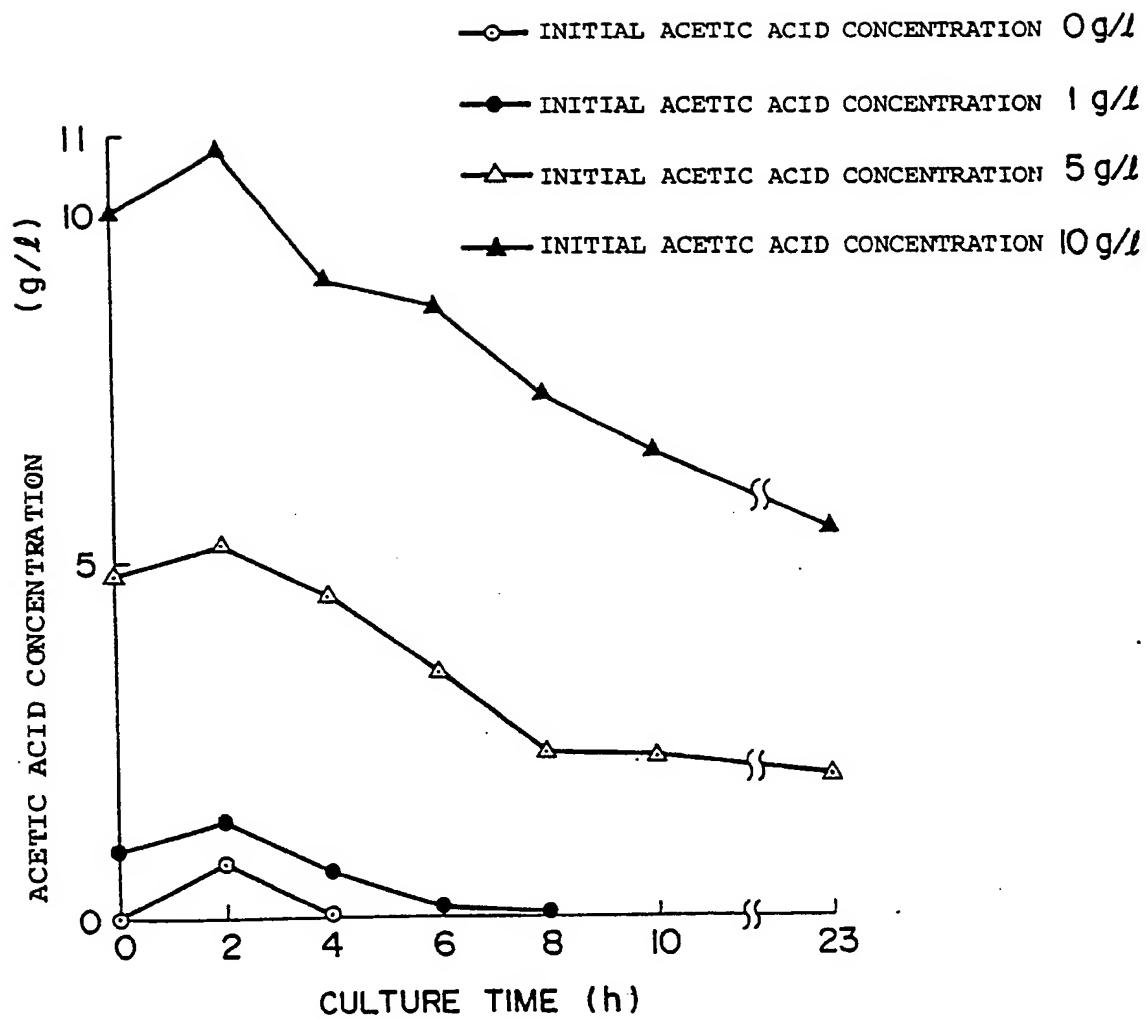


FIG. 6

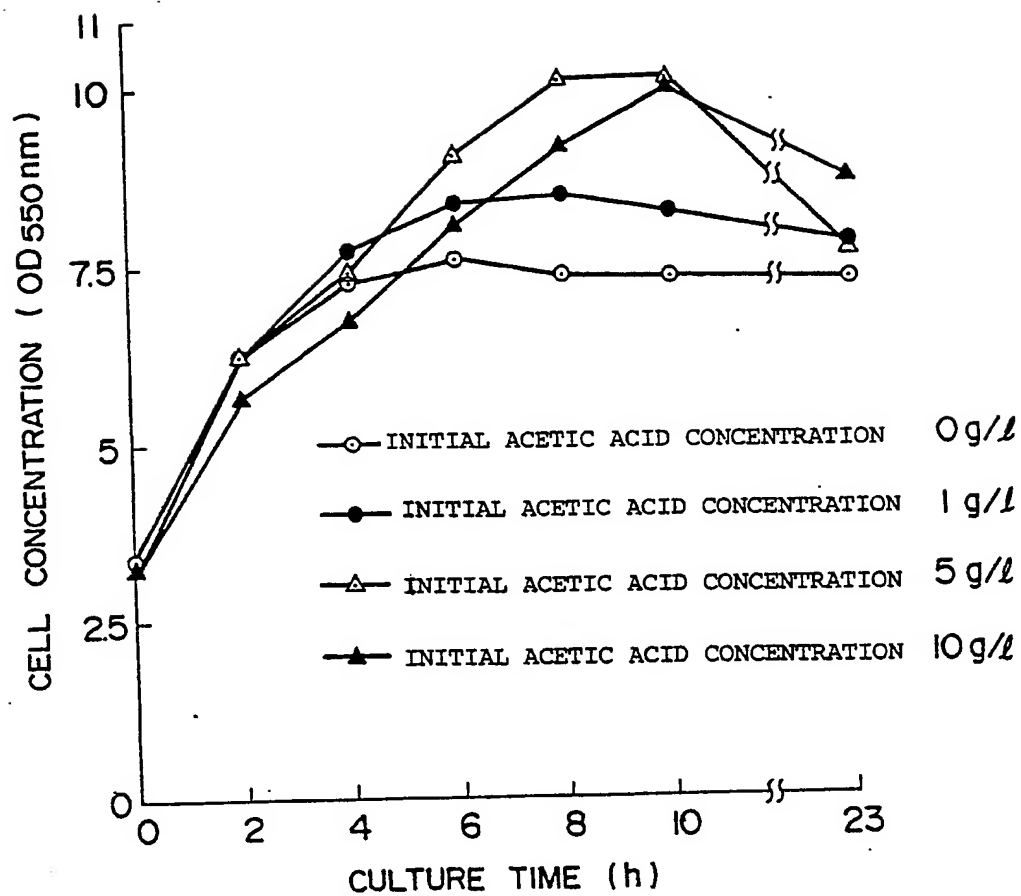


FIG. 6

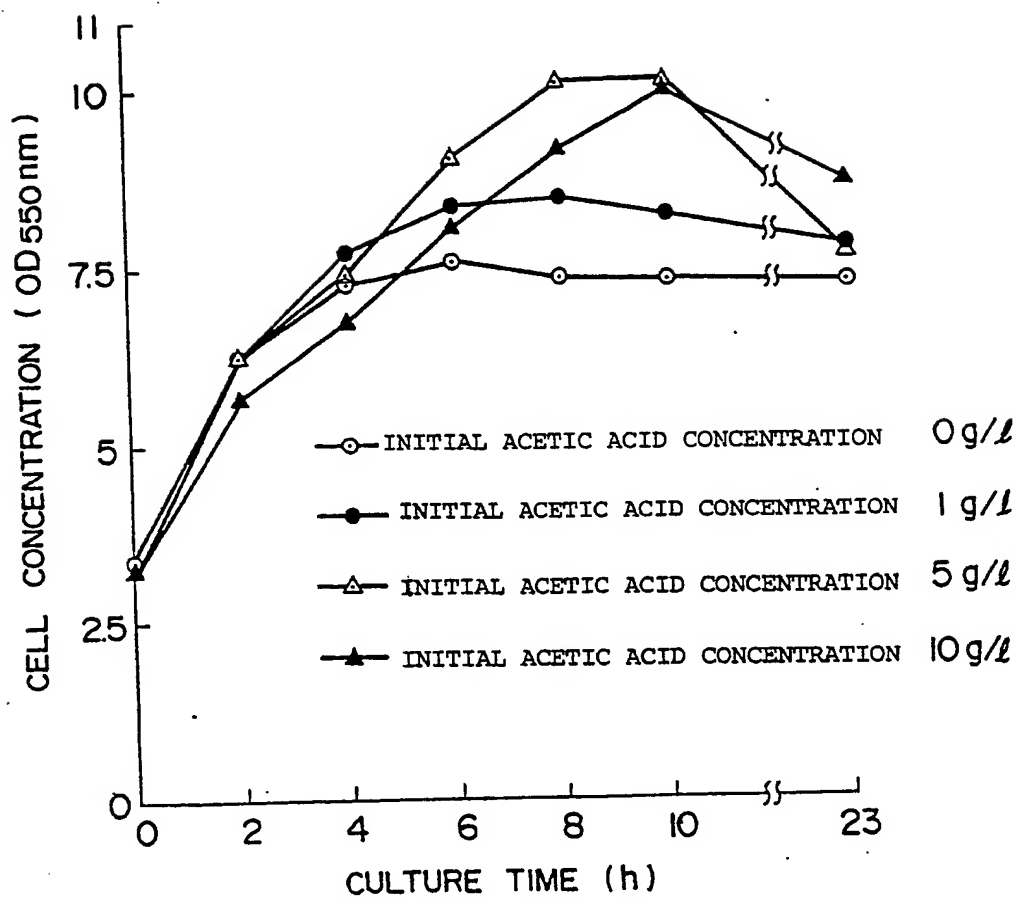


FIG. 7

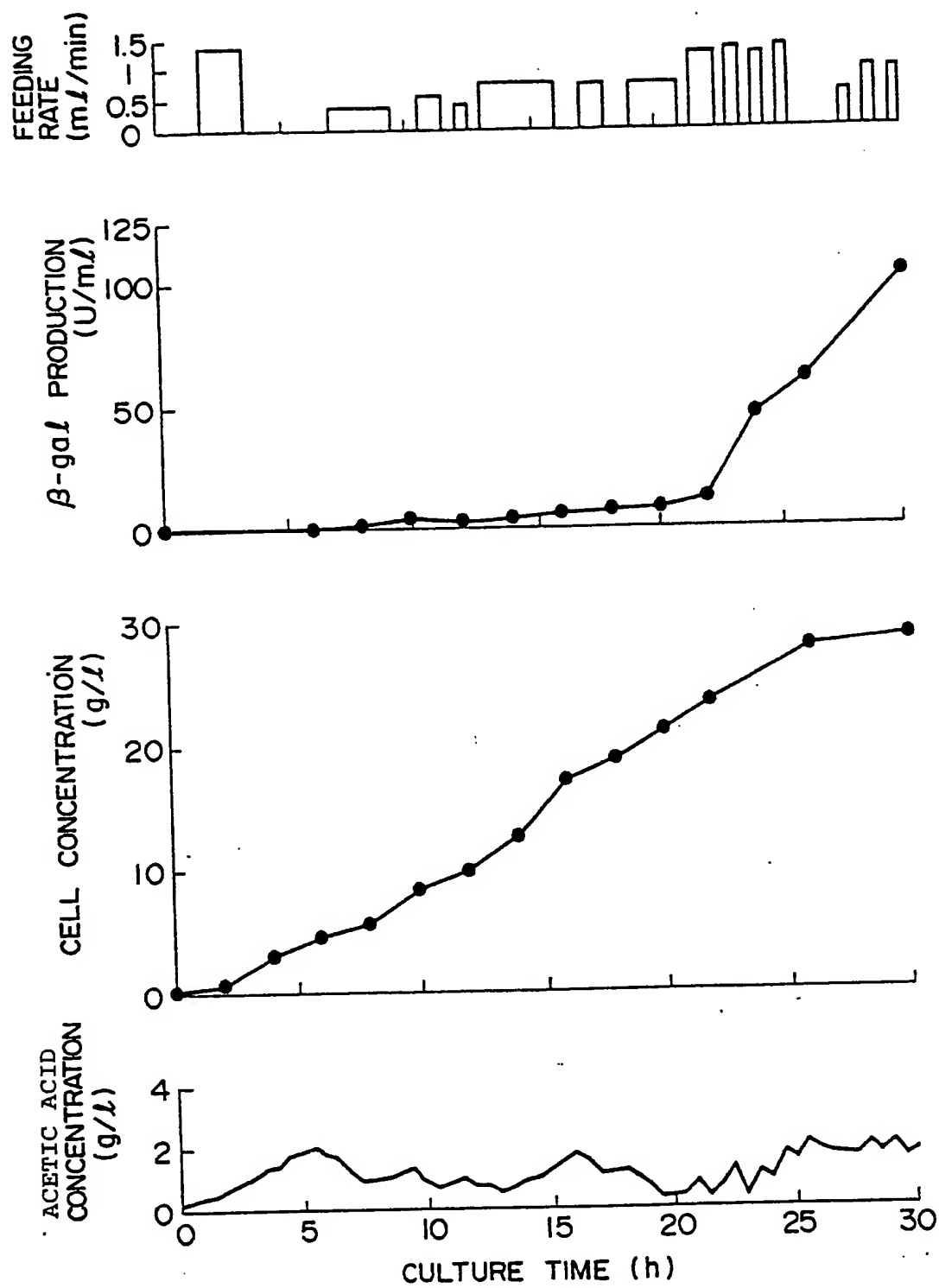


FIG. 7

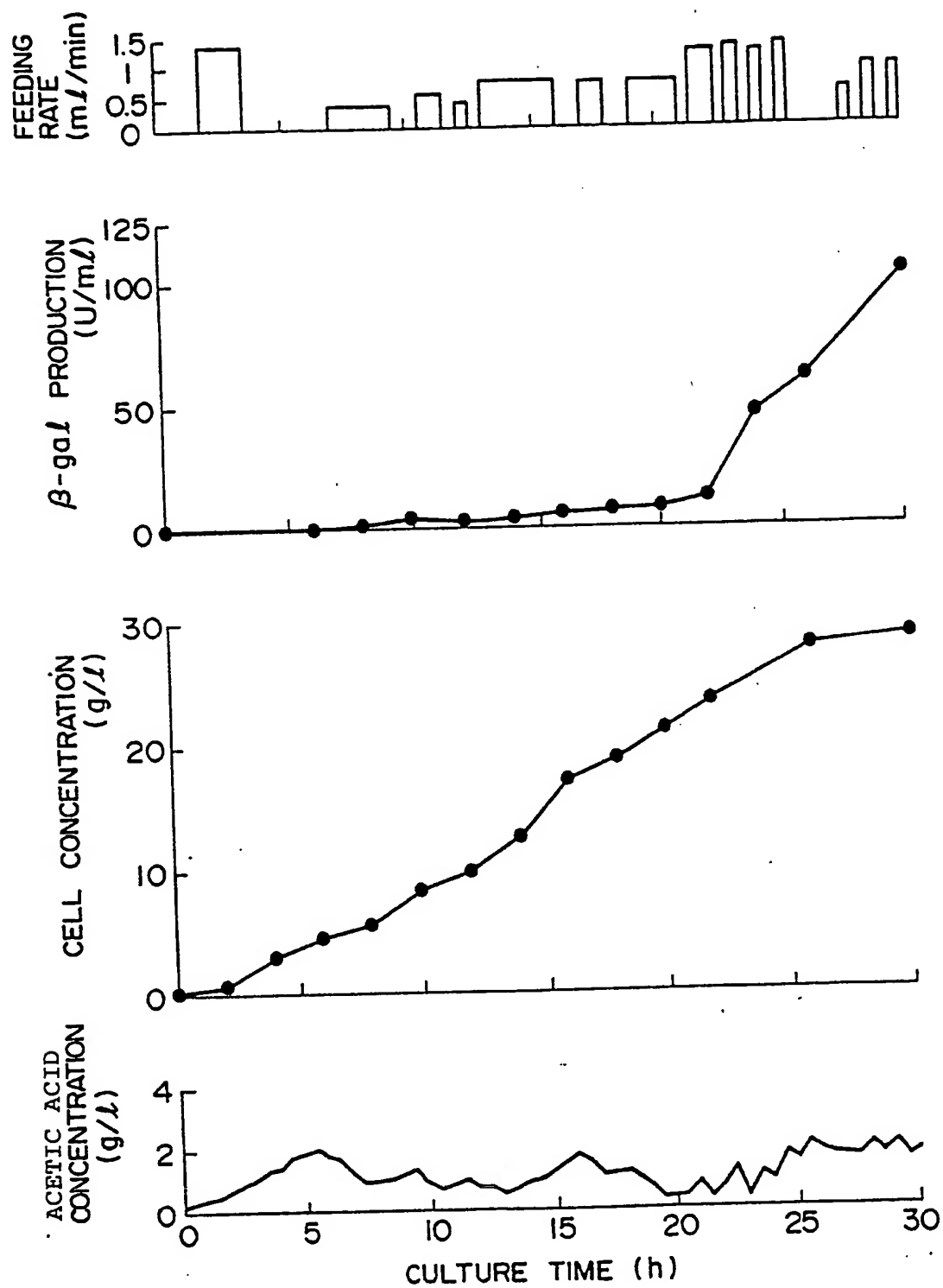


FIG. 8

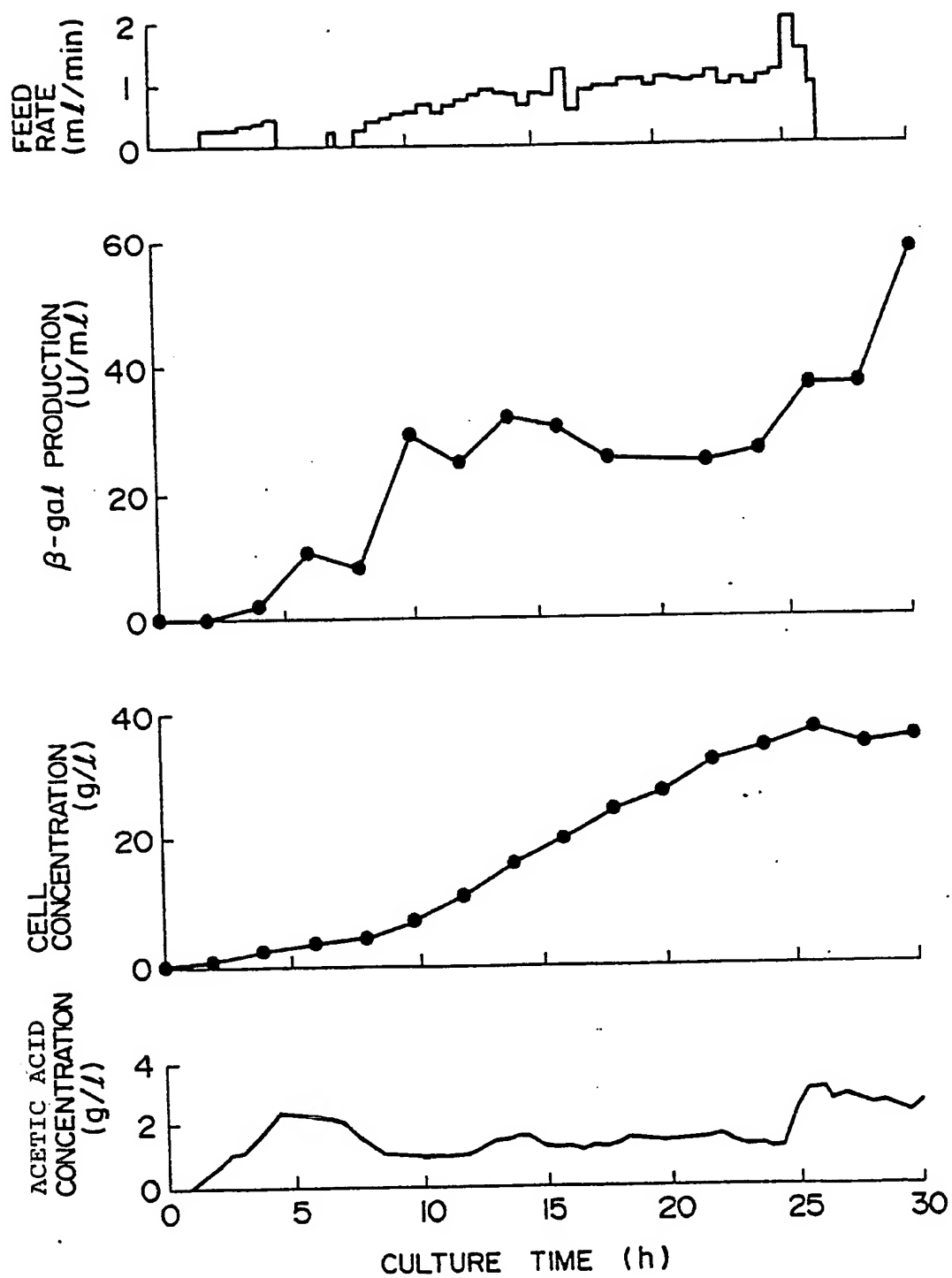


FIG. 8

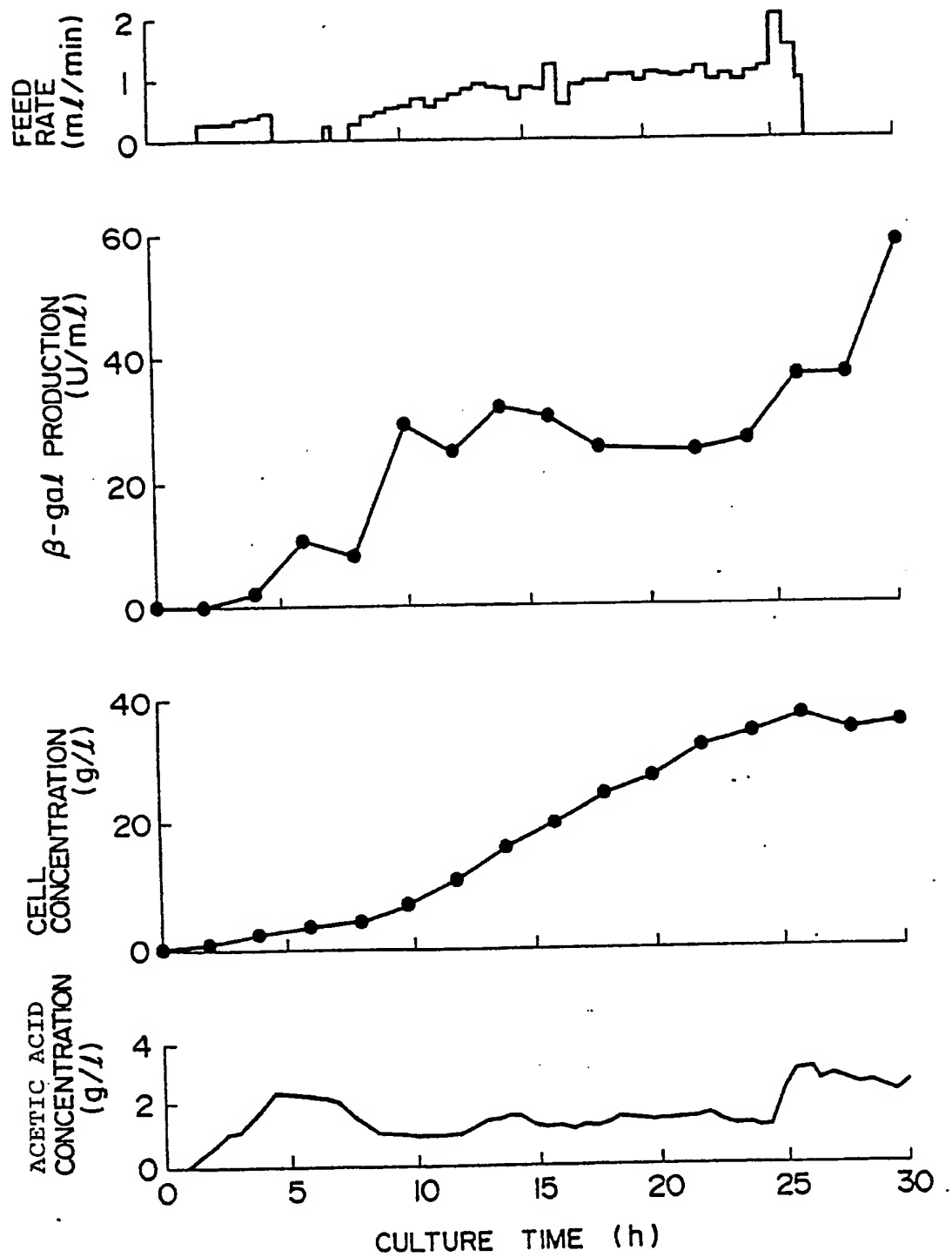


FIG. 9

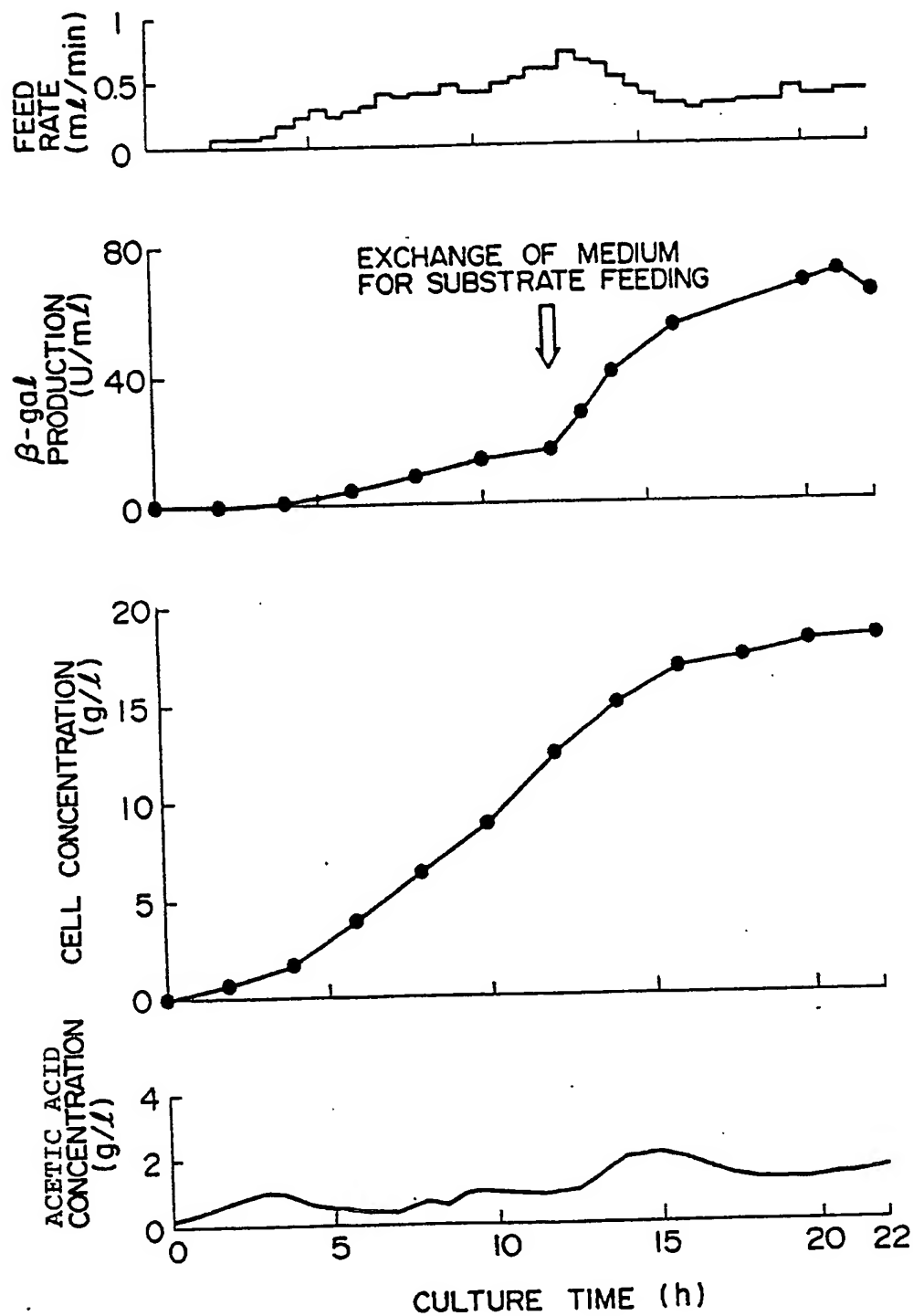


FIG. 9

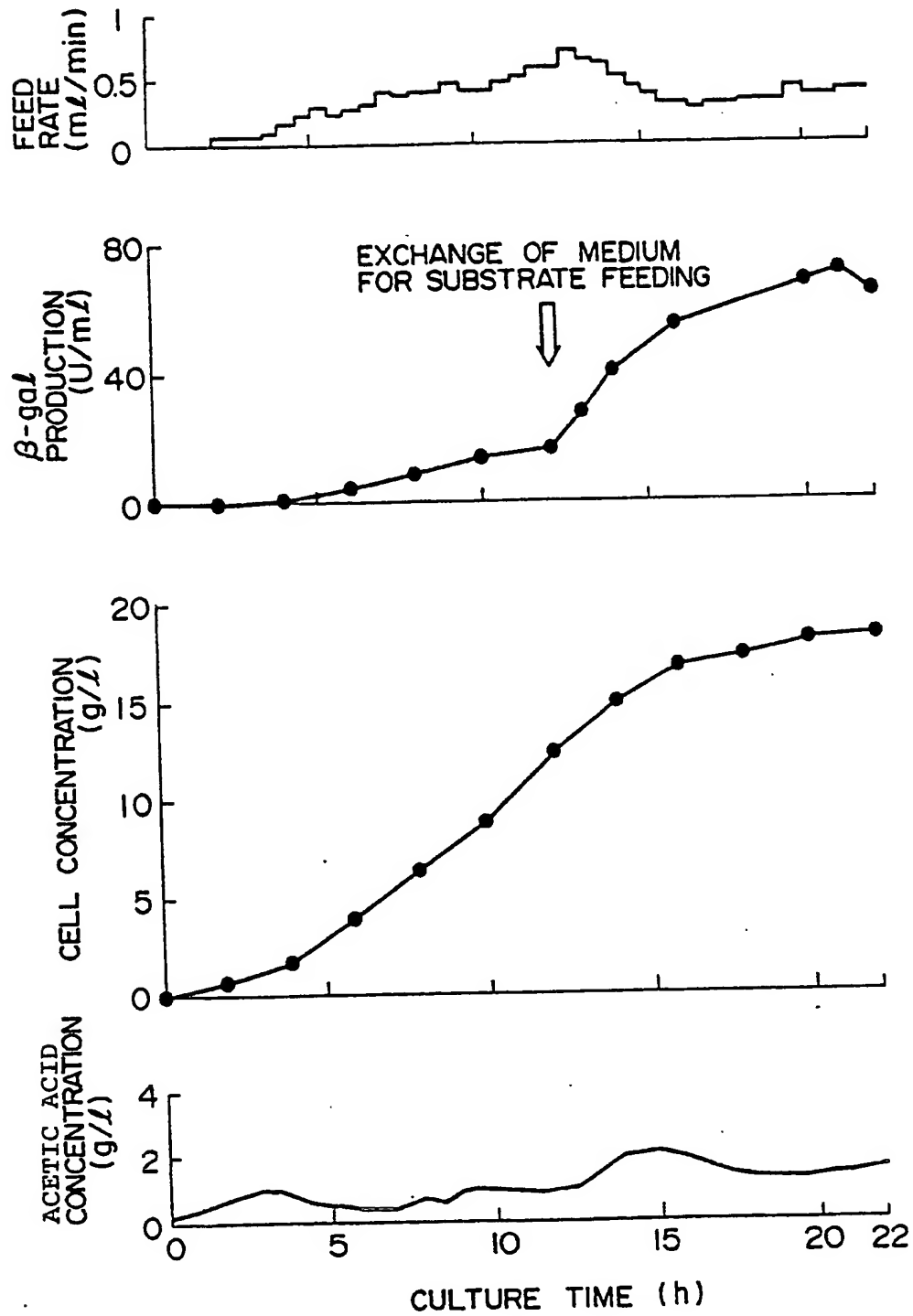


FIG. 10

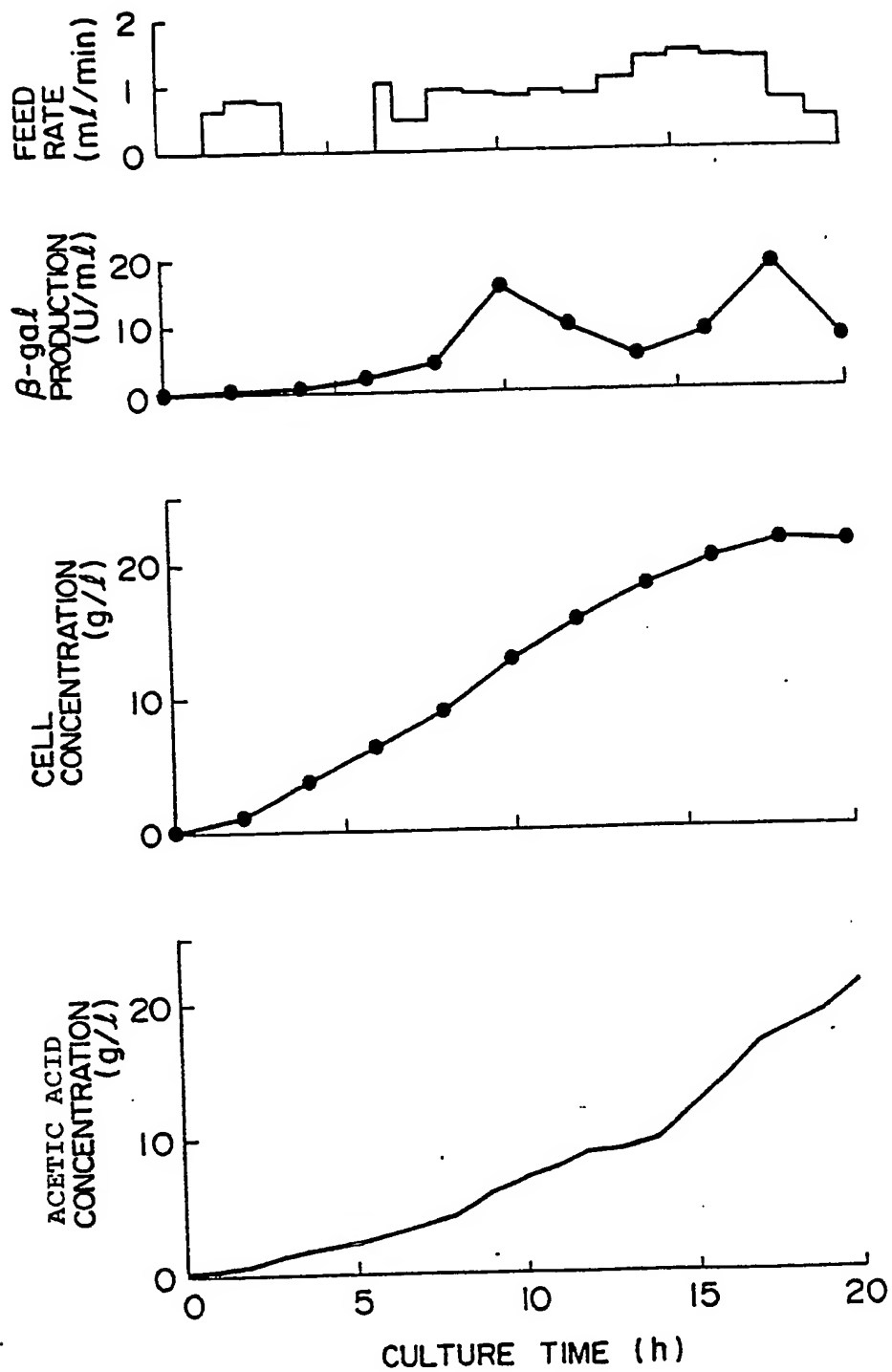
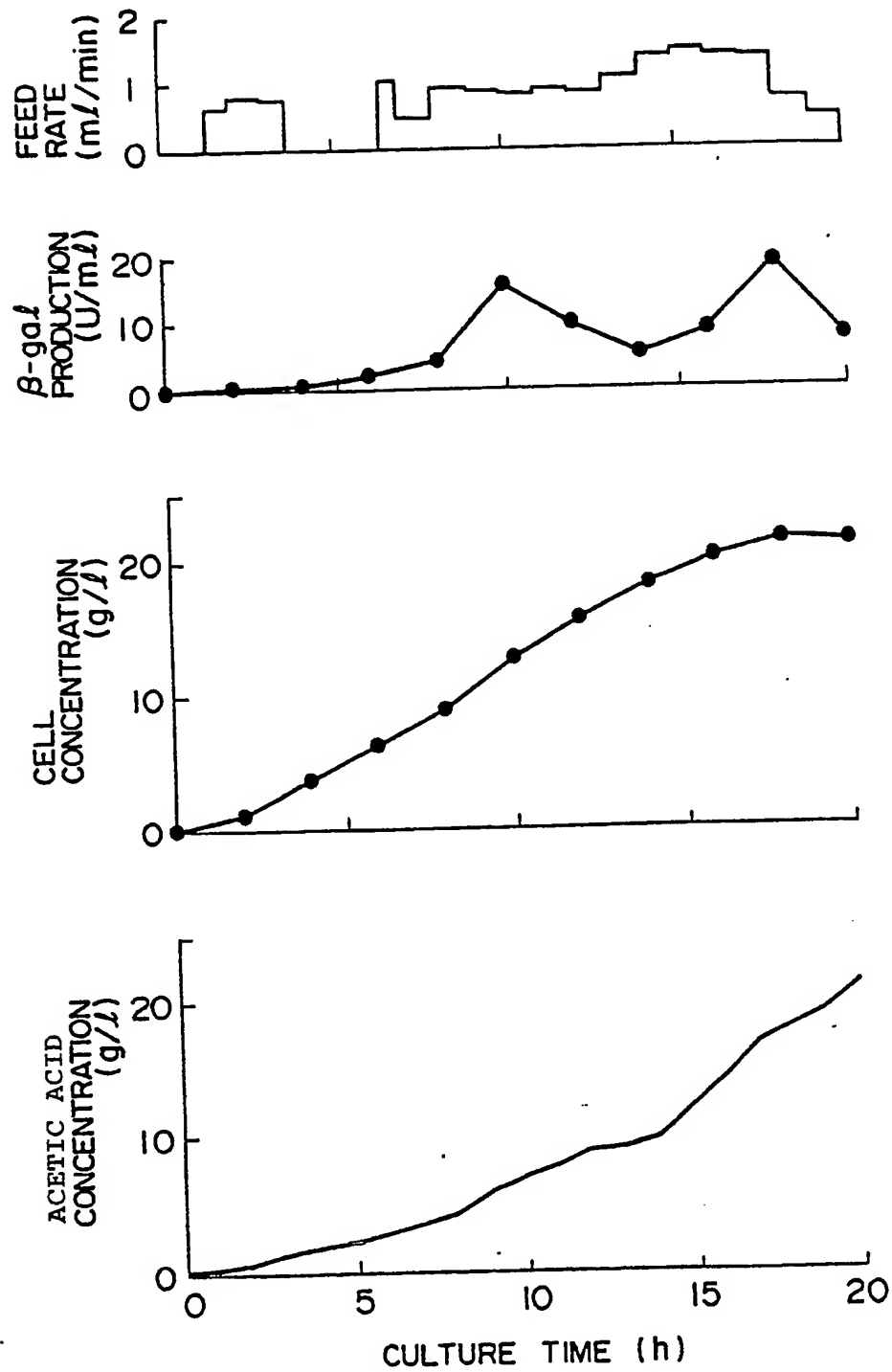


FIG. 10





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 88 10 2463

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. CL.4)
A	EP-A-0 196 061 (HITACHI LTD) * Page 2, lines 8-16 *	1,17	C 12 P 1/00 C 12 M 1/36
P,Y	EP-A-0 219 791 (HITACHI LTD) * Abstract *	1,17	C 12 P 21/02 C 12 N 9/00
Y	ANALYTICA CHIMICA ACTA, vol. 190, 1986, pages 195-203, Elsevier Science Publishers B.V., Amsterdam, NL; J. MÖLLER et al.: "On-line high-performance liquid chromatography for monitoring fermentation processes for penicillin production"	1,17	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN, vol. 2, no. 72, 31st May 1978, page 838 C 78 & JP-A-53 29 985 (KANEKAFUCHI KAGAKU KOGYO K.K.) 20-03-1978		
A	EP-A-0 165 613 (HITACHI LTD)		
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. CL.4)
			C 12 P C 12 N C 12 M
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 22-06-1988	Examiner VAN PUTTEN A.J.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 88 10 2463

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. CL.4)
A	EP-A-0 196 061 (HITACHI LTD) * Page 2, lines 8-16 *	1, 17	C 12 P 1/00 C 12 M 1/36
P, Y	EP-A-0 219 791 (HITACHI LTD) * Abstract *	1, 17	C 12 P 21/02 C 12 N 9/00
Y	ANALYTICA CHIMICA ACTA, vol. 190, 1986, pages 195-203, Elsevier Science Publishers B.V., Amsterdam, NL; J. MÖLLER et al.: "On-line high-performance liquid chromatography for monitoring fermentation processes for penicillin production"	1, 17	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN, vol. 2, no. 72, 31st May 1978, page 838 C 78 & JP-A-53 29 985 (KANEKAFUCHI KAGAKU KOGYO K.K.) 20-03-1978		
A	EP-A-0 165 613 (HITACHI LTD)		
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			C 12 P C 12 N C 12 M
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 22-06-1988	Examiner VAN PUTTEN A.J.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			